

KERRY'S RELIGION OUTREACH DIRECTOR SILENCED

In an article in today's *Washington Times*, reporter Julia Duin says that Mara Vanderslice, the Kerry campaign's director of religious outreach, is no longer permitted to talk to the press. Vanderslice was exposed on June 14 in a Catholic League news release as being a far left-wing activist who has spoken at rallies held by the notoriously anti-Catholic group, ACT UP. The Kerry campaign is now reportedly in a "panic mode" over this revelation.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"It is disingenuous of the Kerry campaign to blame me for simply disclosing who Mara Vanderslice is. But that's how Kerry spokeswoman Allison Dobson is spinning it: 'It is extremely unfortunate and regretful,' she says, 'that John Kerry's political opponents would attack a person of faith in this way.' They just don't get it. The Kerry campaign hires a 29 year-old ultra-leftist who consorts with anti-Catholic bigots and the Catholic League is supposed to take this lying down? And if Vanderslice is so innocent, why have they gagged her? How is a director of outreach supposed to function if he or she is being muzzled?

"The larger issue remains: the Kerry campaign is treating religion the way a sick kid treats lousy-tasting medicine—as something that simply must be swallowed. Why is it that this Catholic senator has no problem with 'gay speech'—he knows how to talk the talk with transgendered types—but stutters every time he engages in 'religion speech'? Are people of faith so distant from him as to be virtual pariahs?

"To top it off, Kerry is now taking advice from the

discredited priest, Father Robert Drinan. Drinan, who says he is part of Kerry's 'kitchen Cabinet' on religious matters, was forced in 1997 to retract an outrageous *New York Times* op-ed column he wrote the year before supporting President Clinton's veto of a ban on partial-birth abortion. If this is the kind of Catholic Kerry is listening to, he's in deep trouble."